DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 341 636 SO 021 947

AUTHOR Labadie, John Antoine
TITLE Establishing Petroglyphs and Pictographs as a Record of Artistic Activity: The Case for the Inclusion of Rock Art in Art History and Art Education.
PUB DATE 91
NOTE 10p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the United States Society for Education through Art (Columbus, OH, 1991).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Art Appreciation; *Art Education; Art Expression; *Art History; Creative Expression; *Curriculum Development; *Global Approach; Higher Education; *History; Painting (Visual Arts); Secondary Education
IDENTIFIERS Petroglyphs; Pictographs; *Rock Art

ABSTRACT

The study of Native American rock art should be more fully incorporated into art education and art history curricula, especially at the precollege level. Rock art is a sensitive reflection of the culture from which it sprang, it provides one of the most direct links with ancient lifeways and ideas recorded by early ancestors, and as a form of artistic expression it is a world wide phenomena. The development and promotion of enhanced curricula and related programs should be placed high on the national agenda for art education reform. At this time, some archaeologists, anthropologists, and art educators are working on this, but for the most part their activities have been confined to locations where rock art sites are easily accessible (western and southwestern United States). If more students are to gain access to this peerless resource then art education and art history curricula must be revised. Through the study of rock art, insight can be gained into the continuum of human creative effort to cope with and understand the world. This is an opportunity art educators must not ignore. (Author/KM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED341636

Establishing petroglyphs and pictographs as a record of artistic activity: The case for the inclusion of rock art in art history and art education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

JOHN LABADIE

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Paper presented at the 1991 USSEA Symposium

"Beyond the traditional in art: Facing a pluralistic society"

John Antoine Labadie
Doctoral Candidate in Art Education
University of Cincinnati

SO 021 947

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Works on rock are probably humankind's most enduring art form. Each painted or incised figure can be viewed both as a work of art and a sensitive reflection of the culture from which it sprang. As a form of artistic expression, rock art is a world wide phenomena. And chronologically such works span the Upper Paleolithic period through the twentieth century; some European and African works have been dated to approximately 35,ØØØ years before the present. Rock art provides one the most direct links with ancient lifeways and ideas recorded by our early ancestors.

Rock art found in the southwestern United States, however, contains records of more recent events experienced by various tribes in that region: buffalo hunts; shamanic rituals; the arrival of the Spanish in the sixteenth century; and activities of the Federal troops in the west after the Civil war. As elsewhere, rock art in the United States consists of petroglyphs (peckings and incisings), pictographs (drawings and paintings), and works which combine these techniques. The oldest dated works in this country are located in the Lower Pecos region of Texas -- pigments from pictographs in the Pecos River style have been Carbon-14 dated at approximately 4ØØØ BP. Although dating rock art has proven difficult, locating and recording these works began in North America with European contact and an accurate contemporary site map would show rock art in every region and nearly every state in this country.

But unfortunately much Native American rock art has been destroyed. This is also the case in many other parts of the globe, where rock art studies have been accomplished. Several recent surveys of recorded sites suggest that perhaps more damage has been done to rock art in the last four decades than in the previous four-hundred years. Even so, today rock art research forms a substantial body of anthropological and archaeological inquiry.

Insights into rock art research and the cultural legacy it reveals have been eloquently offered by Polly Schaafsma (1980), "These images on stone are a valuable component of the archaeological record -- graphic images that often derive from various aspects of prehistoric cosmologies and mythic systems. Some prehistoric ideologies ... have been carried into the ethnographic present by modern descendants of prehistoric peoples, but other such systems, with the exception of what can be learned through the visual imagery of the petroglyphs and rock paintings, have been almost totally lost. Rock art, then, is an important means of reaching some understanding of the sacred dimension of certain related practices of the prehistoric period."

For at least the reasons proffered thus far, I propose that the study of Native American rock art be more fully incorporated into art education and art history curricula -- especially at the precollege level. Additionally, I suggest that the development and promotion of enhanced curricula and related programs be

placed high on the national agenda for art education reform.

In this regard, it should be noted that a small number of archaeologists, anthropologists, and art educators have already begun building the knowledge base and educational programs to bring the study of rock art to a wider audience. But extant curricula and programs are, for the most part, limited to geographical locations where rock art is still plentiful and relatively easy access to this sites is possible. This situation pertains, for the most part, to the western and southwestern regions of the United States; in general, educators in the area east of the Mississippi river have virtually ignored rock art as a potential resource for art education.

If students are to study rock art in more than a few isolated programs, art education and art history curricula must be revised to more fully incorporate this peerless resource. The case is simple: There is no art form more truly a part of this country yet still connected with the continuum of global art production through the ages than Native American rock art. And with respect to the art history of the United States, if we as educators are to be honest in our teaching and want to present a comprehensive view of what has actually been produced here, then we must begin at the beginning. In my view this places Native American rock art at the core of a revised and clearly focused art history.

Regardless of origin or intended purpose, it is clear that rock art is an expression of the cognitive world and lifeways of those who created it. These paintings and engravings can stand on

their own, many of them masterpieces, and even the ones by lesser artists are often exciting because of fantastic settings. The individuals who drew forms on walls and pecked them into rock surfaces knew exactly what they were doing, and the individuals who came to look knew exactly what the forms meant. This is the one message that comes through loud and clear across the ages. Rock art is also overwhelming for its other messages, the ones that we will never be able to read. Although the world of those who lived in other time and places cannot be recreated, the study of pictographs and petroglyphs may make that world as available to us as it may ever be.

We art educators must not deny our students the chance to reconstruct this world view. The underlying theme is continuity. Tomorrow will be a working out, at an increasing intensity and on a larger scale, of forces unleashed and recorded by the artists of the Upper Paleolithic. Through the study of rock art we can gain insight into the continuum of human creative effort to cope with and understand the world. It is an opportunity we must not ignore.

References

Beisele, M. (1983). Interpretations of rock art and folklore: Communication systems in evolutionary perspective. African Archaeology Society, 3, 54-60.

Brommer, G. E. (1981). Discovering art history. Worcester, MA: Davis.

Bryant, V. M., Jr. (1977). The 16,000 year pollen record of vegetational change in Central Texas. Polynology, 1, 143-156.

Chadderdon, M. F. (1983). Baker Cave, Val Verde County, Texas: The 1976 excavations. San Antonio: University of Texas (Center for Archaeological Research, Special Report, 13).

Collins, M. B. (1969). Test excavations at Amistad International Reservoir, Fall 1967. Austin: University of Texas (Texas Archaeological Survey Project Papers, Number 16).

Curtis, E. S. (1915). The North American Indian (Vol. 10). Norwood, MA: Plimpton Press.

Fagan, B. (1985). In the beginning. Boston: Little, Brown.

Furst, P. T. (1972). Flesh of the gods: The ritual use of hallucinogens. New York: Praeger.

Gebhard, D. (1960). The Diablo Cave paintings. Art Journal, 20, 79-82.

Gebhard, D. (1960). Prehistoric paintings of the Diablo Region of Western Texas. Publications in Art and Science. Roswell, NM: Roswell Museum and Art Center (Number 3).

Gebhard, D. (1965). Prehistoric rock paintings of the Seminole Canyon Area, Val Verde County, Texas (Report submitted to the National Park Service). Southwest Region, Sante Fe, New Mexico.

Graham, J. A. & Davis W. (1958). Appraisal of the archaeological resources of the Daiblo Reservoir, Val Verde County, Texas, (Report to the National Park Service). Austin: Archeological Salvage Program Field Office.

Grieder, T. (1965). Report on a study of pictographs in Satan Canyon, Val Verde County, Texas (Texas Archaeological Salvage Project, Miscellaneous Papers, 2). Austin, TX: University of Texas.

Grieder, T. (1965). Periods in Pecos Style pictographs. American Antiquities, 31, 710-720.

Halifax, A. H. (1979). Shamanic voices. New York: E. P. Dutton.

Harris, A. H. (1977). Biotic environments of the Paleo-Indian. In E. Johnson (Ed.), Paleo-Indian lifeways (pp. 1-12). Lubbock, TX: West Texas Museum Association (Museum Journal 17).

Haynes, C. V. (1969). The earliest Americans. Science, 166, 709-715.

Haynes, C. V. (1980). The Clovis culture. Canadian Journal of Anthropology, 1(1), 115-121.

Hester, T. R. (1981). Digging in South Texas prehistory. San Antonio, TX: Corona.

Honour, H. & Fleming, J. (1982). The visual arts: A history. Englewood cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Jackson, A. T. (1938). Picture writing of Texas Indians. Austin, TX: University of Texas (Publication 3809).

Janson, H. W. (1969). History of art. New York: Harry N. Abrams.

Jopling, C. F. (Ed.). (1971). Art and aesthetics in primitive societies. New York: E. P. Dutton.

Kirkland, F. (1937a). A comparison of Texas indian pictographs with Paleolithic painting in Europe. Central Texas Archaeologist, 3, 9-26.

Kirkland, F. (1937b). A study of Indian pictures in Texas. Bulletin of the Texas Archaeological and Paleontological Society, 9, 9-119.

Kirkland, F. (1938). A description of Texas pictographs. Bulletin of the Texas Archaeological and Anthropological Society, 10, 11-40.

Kirkland, F. & Newcomb, W. W., Jr. (1967). The rock art of Texas Indians. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Kleinbauer, W.E. (1987) Art history in Disciplined-based Art education. Journal of Aesthetic Education, 21, 205-215.

Labadie, J. A. (1991). Art history and archaeology: A symbiotic relationship in the investigation of the Lower Pecos pictographs. In P. Wheat (Ed.), Proceedings of the 61st Annual Meeting of the Texas Archaeological Society.

(pp. 32-37). San Antonio, TX: Center for Archaeological Research, the University of Texas, San Antonio.

Labadie, J. H. (1991). The Parida Cave conservation project. Bulletin of the Texas Archaeological Society, 59.

Levine, M. H. (1957). Prehistoric art and ideology. American Anthropologist, 59, 949-964.

Pearce, J. E. & Jackson, A. T. (1933). A prehistoric rock shelter in Val Verde County, Texas. Austin, TX: University of Texas, Anthropology Papers (Number 1).

Ridington, R. (1982). Technology, world view, and adoptive strategy in a northern hunting society. Canadian review, Sociology and Anthropology, 19, 469-479.

Shafer, H. J. (1986). Ancient Texans. San Antonio, TX: Texas Monthly Press.

Schaafsma, Polly (1980). Indian rock art of the Southwest. Sante Fe, NM: School of American Research.

Silver, C. (1985). The rock art of Seminole Canyon State Historical Park: Deterioration and projects for conservation. Texas Parks and Wildlife (Contract Number 340-299).

Swauger, J. L. (1974). Rock art of the Upper Ohio Valley. Akademische Druck-und Verlagsanstalt, Graz, Austria.

Swauger, J. L. Petroglyphs of Ohio. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

Turpin, S. A. (1984a). The Red Linear Style pictographs of the Lower Pecos Region, Texas. Plains Anthropologist, 29, 181-198.

Turpin, S. A. (1984b). The Red Linear Style pictographs of the Lower Pecos River Region. Plains Anthropologist, 33, 279-284.

Turpin, S. A. (1984c). Pictographs of the Red Monochrome Style in the Lower Pecos Region, Texas. Bulletin of the Texas Archaeological Society, 55, 123-144 (1986 for 1984).

Turpin, S. A. (1986b). The Meyers Springs and Bailand Shelters: Iconograph parallels. La Tierra, 13(1), 5-8.

Turpin, S. A. (1986c). Toward a definition of a pictographic style: the Bold Line Geometric. Plains Anthropologist, 31, 153-162.

Turpin, S. A. (1988). Arroyo De Los Indios: A historic pictograph in northern Coahuila, Mexico. Plains Anthropologist, 33, 279-

285.

Turpin, S. A. (1989b). The iconography of contact: Spanish influence in the rock art of the Middle Rio Grande. In D. H. Thomas (Ed.). Archaeological and historical perspectives on the Spanish borderlands west (pp. 277-299). Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution.

Ucko, P. J. & Rosenfeld, A. (1967). Paleolithic cave art. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Yellen, J. (1977). Archaeological approaches to the present: Models for reconstructing the past. New York: academic Press.